

COUNTRY Eastern Germany 25X1 REPORT NO. 25X1

TOPIC Military Information from the Engineer Training Area of Dessau-Rosslau

EVALUATION See below PLACE OBTAINED 25X1

DATE OF CONTENT 11 June to 5 July 1952

DATE OBTAINED 12 August 1952

REFERENCES 25X1

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. From 11 to 13 June 1952, from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., ferries were built daily at the engineer training site in Rosslau, north of Dessau (N 52/E 17). Six pontoons were used for each ferry. The ferries were floated into place beside improvised trestles. About one company was engaged daily in these activities. There was only minor training activity on the water on 14 and 15 June. Blasting practices were heard in the woods near Kuehnau.

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A number of bridges was built in the area of Brambach-Aken, between kilometer marks 268 and 274.5 during the period from 14 to 19 June 1952, but no bridges were built at the training site in Rosslau. On 18 June, source saw between 20 and 24 ferries which had been assembled during the preceding days, had been carried downstream by the current as far as the area of Ritzmuck-Brambach and, on 20 June, were tugged back to the training site in Rosslau by a steamer which had been requisitioned on the river. Between 300 and 400 soldiers were transferred from the camp at the engineer training site southeast of Rosslau to the area of Ritzmuck-Brambach. With the end of the practices on 20 June, the soldiers were transferred to Rosslau. During the practices in the area between Brambach and Aken, two bridges were built with heavy equipment, one near kilometer marker 263.5 and one near kilometer marker 273.5. No emergency construction material was used. Source saw for the first time special vehicles each carrying one pontoon. The vehicles backed up to the river and the pontoons slid down a ramp into the water. Source stated that previously the pontoons had been carried to the river by hand. He also noted that the vehicles and equipment needed for bridge building were concentrated in a narrow area about 50 meters wide. He expressed the belief that the practice was made under combat conditions, as smoke bombs were discharged at kilometer marker 273.5. However, the bombs provided only a poor smoke screen for the bridge although the wind was favorable. Another bridge was built near kilometer marker 268 at 9 p.m. on 19 June. Between 16 and 22 ferries were constructed downstream and upstream by a total of three companies which were equipped with three-section heavy bridge-building equipment and had motor boats. It required between 40 and 60 minutes to float the ferries into place. Source noticed a number of high-ranking officers including several generals. Only individual ferries were constructed and bank sections were prepared in the various camps during the period from 20 June to 5 July 1952. (1)

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2. At 9:30 a.m. on 17 June, about 70 engineers were seen constructing bridge trestles in about 12 minutes near Brambach west of Rosslau. Thirty pontoons, 1 assault boat and 4 pontoons mounting a crane lay on the bank.

3. At 9 p.m. on 20 June, a freight train with 45 [redacted] trucks was observed en route from Dessau to Wittenberg (N 52/E 37). A freight train carrying 44 [redacted] trucks passed through the Dessau railroad station on 23 June. (2)

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4. On 21 June, several columns of amphibious vehicles with armored superstructures [redacted] were seen on the Zerbst (N 52/E 98)-Dessau road. (3)

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[redacted]

[redacted] Comments.

(1) This information indicates intensive engineer training in Rosslau and Brambach-Aken with emphasis on the construction of ferries and the bridge building. The motor vehicle [redacted] confirm the two engineer regiments of the GORF from Bernburg and Magdeburg. No motor vehicles of the engineer units of the 8th Gds Army also previously reported in that area were seen.

(2) The trains mentioned which carried [redacted] trucks probably went under the motor vehicle exchange program.

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(3) Possibly incoming special vehicles for one of the two engineer regiments of the GORF [redacted]

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